

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: _____

Name: _____

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

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Best Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): _____

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

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House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
House Resolution 13
Testimony of Tira Houston
March 16, 2021

Good morning Chairman Baldrige, Vice Chair McClain, and Ranking Member Sheehy and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tira Houston, and I am a Chief Operator at Toledo Refining Company. Additionally, I am the Lead Chair for the Women of Steel and a member of Operations Grievance and Negotiations Committee for the United Steelworkers Local 912. In my role as Chief Operator, I am responsible for cleaning finished products before they are further processed and go to storage. As Lead Chair for the Women of Steel I have had the opportunity to organize donations at the local women's shelter, walk the picket line arm and arm with fellow Union nurses, push giving for back-to-school book bag and supply drives, encourage preschoolers to read by giving them one of their first books, and sponsoring our annual Christmas party. In my role as Operations Grievance and Negotiations Committeewoman I am faced with the task of working with company management to build a dialog and communicate about our members issues in the refinery. Due to this position, I understand the back and forth that is needed to come to an informed conclusion around divisive issues. The possible shutdown of Enbridge Line 5 and its economic effects to the region, and to the Toledo Refining Company specifically, is particularly divisive in today's political climate. In the last year USW Local 912 has worked with the Toledo Refining Company to find a feasible alternative to Enbridge Line 5 to deliver the raw materials our facility requires to operate, and we have come up empty. We have talked to the media, USW staff members, governors and officials in Congress to plead our case for keeping the line operational until the Great Lakes Tunnel project can be completed.

In my 18 years of service, this job has provided me, and many of my coworkers, the income, growth, friendships, leaderships, community support, and security that we as middle-class citizens need to support and grow our families. If the State of Michigan allows the shutdown of Line 5, thousands of people will be impacted because of the financial influx that is circulated in and around the refinery daily. Not only do we support the area near the refinery, but we also support many surrounding communities. Our jobs are essential and create over 5 billion dollars in economic activity in the region which helps to support and grow our communities.

If we want to preserve these family sustaining jobs and continue supporting Ohio communities with the least amount of impact to the environment, we need to support the continued operation of Line 5 until the Great Lakes Tunnel Project can be completed.

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

This is the best choice to protect good jobs and the environment. Other options will lead to an increase in road and rail traffic of petroleum products, added risks of fleets of semi-trucks on residential roadways, and the added risk of spills into the Great Lakes from product that would be acquired by cargo vessels.

I urge you to support House Resolution 13 to protect good jobs and the environment, and again, thank you for allowing me to testify here today.